

# Piedmont Electric CONNECTION

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Hillsborough, N.C.

www.pemc.coop

April 2012

## ANNUAL MEETING SET FOR APRIL 20

Please circle April 20 on your calendar and make plans to attend this year's Annual Meeting of the Members.

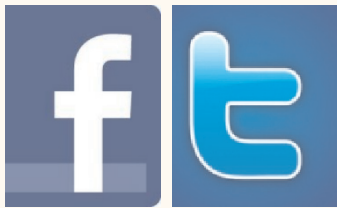
Registration begins at 6 p.m., followed by the business meeting at 8 p.m.

"Electric Cooperatives Build A Better World" is the theme for the meeting, which will be at Orange High School in Hillsborough.

Three seats will be up for election on the Cooperative's Board of Directors.

In the drawing for door prizes, many cash prizes will be awarded, including the grand prize of \$500 cash. Three televisions are also among the many prizes to be given away at the meeting. **Members must be present to win any of the many prizes.**

Please see the cover wrap of this magazine for more information about the meeting, as well as your registration card. We look forward to seeing you there.



## Please 'Like' Us on Facebook, Twitter

With the goal of reaching out to all its member-consumers, Piedmont Electric has opened its own Facebook and Twitter accounts.

Our Facebook page will focus on energy efficiency messages, promotional events and picture-sharing, including videos.

In the event of major storms we will be using these tools to send out updates.

To create some interest in our Facebook page, Piedmont Electric is sponsoring a contest with our local schools.

The contest is entitled "Show Us Your Power" and we have created our first educational music video on energy efficiency to give the school contestants a sample video when thinking of ways to create their video submittals.

The educational music video is

entitled "Today I Don't Feel like Wasting Energy" and can be seen when liking us on Facebook and clicking on the "Show Us Your Power" link.

The music video contest provides a creative forum for students, teachers and staff to discuss energy efficiency as well as raise

awareness in the community of the importance of energy efficiency.

Submissions can be serious or humorous music videos,

but should be thoughtful, creative and original.

There will be one grand prize winner of \$500, and two \$250 runners-up prizes. Prizes will be awarded to the schools for school-related purposes chosen by the winning contestants.

A link to the official contest rules, eligibility and entry form can be found on our Facebook page.

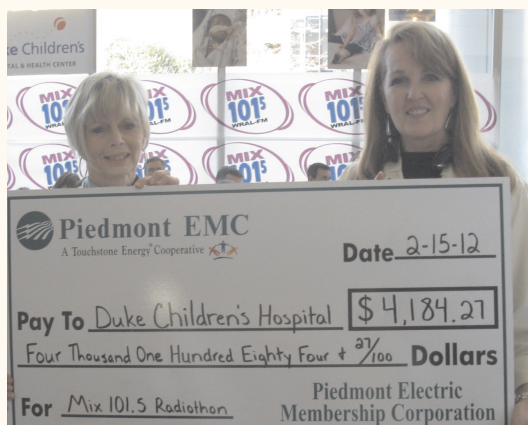
To find us on Facebook you need to join Facebook and search Piedmont Electric Membership Corporation.

You can follow us on our Twitter feed at:

<https://twitter.com/#!/PiedmontEMC>.



## CO-OP EMPLOYEES DONATE TO DUKE KIDS



*Piedmont Electric employee Rachel Hawkins, left, presents a check for more than \$4,184 to Vanna Fox of WRAL's Mix 101.5 on behalf of the Cooperative's employees. The money was raised at a golf tournament to benefit Duke's Children's Hospital, and is part of Piedmont Electric's commitment to the communities it serves.*



From Your President...

## Co-ops Play Big Community Role

*R. G. Brecheisen*

*President & Chief Executive Officer*

Last year, the U.S. Senate—building off similar action by the United Nations General Assembly—designated 2012 as International Year of Cooperatives.

As a result, cooperatives everywhere are celebrating our unique not-for-profit, member-owned and controlled business model.

As you know, Piedmont Electric is an electric cooperative—as a result, you and everyone else who receives electric service from us is a member, not a customer.

Because you and your fellow members govern how Piedmont Electric operates, our top priority remains providing safe and reliable service and keeping your electric bills affordable.

Local control also means we're in the business of improving the quality of life in the communities we serve, from offering college scholarships to advice on how you can make your home or business more energy efficient.

Electric co-ops, which serve 42 million members, are just one type of cooperative operating in Amer-

ica. Dairy cooperatives produce nearly 90% of our nation's milk. Credit unions? They're cooperatives, too, with more than 8,000 across the country serving 91 million consumers.

You can also find housing, hardware and even funeral co-ops throughout the U.S.

Some agricultural marketing cooperatives have become household names: Sunkist, Ocean Spray, Land O'Lakes and Blue Diamond Almonds, for example.

Together, all of us are a key part of our local economy. We provide jobs to folks who live right here—your neighbors and friends.

Co-ops deliver goods and services that keep our communities humming. We're happy to lend a hand when we're able, and we enjoy being involved with schools and community organizations.

At Piedmont Electric, we return any excess profits, called margins, to you in the form of capital credits. That money then gets reinvested locally—perhaps at a grocery store or other retail

outlet, which in turn allows the owners to hire more people.

While not a new concept—Benjamin Franklin started the first cooperative, the Philadelphia Contributionship to insure homes from Loss by Fire, in 1752 (it still operates today!)—the cooperative form of business continues as an integral part of our lives each day.

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As mentioned on the previous page, your electric cooperative is joining the “Facebook Generation” and “Twitter World.”

This will open another line of communication with members of all ages—though admittedly more of the younger generation.

We hope you will take time to “like us” on our Facebook page and “follow us” on Twitter to see the advantages this communication tool offers.

• • •

Piedmont Electric will hold the most important meeting of its year this month.

The Annual Meeting of the Members will be Friday, April 20, at Orange High School.

There are challenges ahead for the Cooperative and we want to keep you informed. We also want to point out the successes Piedmont Electric achieved in 2011 and how we plan to build on these successes.

Please join your neighbors and friends at the Annual Meeting. We look forward to seeing you there.

### *If Your Power Goes Out, Call Us...*

If your power goes out, call Piedmont Electric's outage reporting number—800.449.2667—to report the outage.

The Cooperative uses your phone number to determine your service location when you use the automated outage reporting system to report a service outage.

If, like some folks—you no longer have a land line and use a cellular phone, please make sure to let the Cooperative know.

Unless we have your correct phone number(s), we may not be able to pinpoint your outage location as quickly.

Please complete and return the form on your monthly billing statement if your telephone number has changed.



*R. G. Brecheisen*

# How to Buy an Energy-Efficient Appliance

You go shopping for a new refrigerator, and you're on a budget. The best buy is the fridge with the lowest sales price, right?

Not necessarily. If you buy the lowest-priced refrigerator, you may end up spending more than if you buy a more expensive one.

The reason? The cost of owning a home appliance has three components: the initial purchase price, the cost of repairs and maintenance, and the cost to operate it.

To figure out how much you'll spend over the lifetime of the appliance, you have to look at all these factors.

The appliance with the lowest initial purchase price, or even the one with the best repair record, isn't necessarily the one that costs the least to operate. Here's an example of how an appliance's energy consumption can affect your out-of-pocket costs.

Suppose you're in the market for a new refrigerator-freezer. Different models of refrigerators with the same capacity can vary dramatically in the amount of electricity they use.

For one popular size and configuration, for example, the annual electricity consumption varies across models from a low of about 600 kilowatt-hours (kWh) a year to a high of more than 800 kWh a year.

Based on national average electricity prices, that means the annual cost to operate this refrigerator can range from about \$65 to \$85, depending on which model you buy.

A \$20 difference in annual operating costs might not sound like much. But remember, you will enjoy these savings year after year for the life of the appliance, while you must pay any difference in purchase price only once. As a result, you may actually save money by buying the more expensive, more energy-efficient model.

You can learn about the energy efficiency of an appliance that you're thinking about buying through the yellow-and-black EnergyGuide label.

When you shop for an appliance in a dealer's showroom, you

should find the EnergyGuide labels hanging on the inside of an appliance or secured to the outside.

Some appliances also may feature the ENERGY STAR logo, which means the appliance is significantly more energy efficient than the average comparable model.

To compare how updating appliances and making other changes around your home can impact your electric bill, visit [www.TogetherWeSave.com](http://www.TogetherWeSave.com).

## Beat the Peak



As part of Piedmont Electric's new "Beat the Peak" program, we will be asking participating members to voluntarily adjust their thermostats, turn off lights and delay the use of major appliances on hot summer weekdays between 1 p.m. and 6 p.m.

To volunteer to receive these alerts, text **BTPEAK** to **85700** to enroll for text alerts, or send an email to [BeatThePeak@pemc.coop](mailto:BeatThePeak@pemc.coop) for email notices, or call the Cooperative at 800.222.3107.

Message and data rates may apply depending on your cell phone contract.

## By the Numbers...

- 1,942 members have signed up for the use monitoring portion of [www.MyUsage.com](http://www.MyUsage.com)
- 702 members are participating in the FlexPay Program
- 453 members have turned in receipts for 4,430 CFLs, representing a total of 1,519,490 kWhs saved toward our Senate Bill 3 Mandate
- 33 solar water heater rebates given to members
- 868 electric water heater wraps sold
- 551 residential members on Time-of-Day Rates
- 767 visits to TogetherWeSave.com for a total calculated savings with the home savings calculator tool of \$278,000.51
- 137 members have signed up to participate in the "Beat the Peak" program



**Piedmont Electric & ElecTel CCU will be closed Friday, April 6, for the Easter holiday. Employees will be on call. Please have a safe holiday.**

## IS AN ELECTRIC CAR IN YOUR FUTURE?

Please contact the Cooperative if you plan to buy an electric vehicle that will be charged at your home or business served by Piedmont Electric. We need to ensure the distribution transformer and conductors are adequately sized to serve this added load and that no safety issues exist.



## April Right-of-Way Maintenance

**Orange County**  
Ferguson Road  
Bowden Road

Damascus Church Road  
Smith Level Road

Dogwood Acres Subdivision  
(and surrounding areas)

*Locations are subject to change due to uncontrollable circumstances*





## BRIGHT IDEAS

# GRANT PROGRAM OFF TO AN EARLY START

Piedmont Electric is once again co-sponsoring the Bright Ideas Grant Program to help area educators finance innovative teaching projects not otherwise financed by traditional school funding.

Teachers may begin applying this month for Bright Idea Grants of up to \$1,500.

The deadline to submit applications for the 2012-2013 school year is September 21, 2012.

Teachers who submit their ap-

plication by the early-bird deadline of August 17 will be entered in a drawing to win a \$500 Visa gift card.

This year's online application includes an explanation of the creative project and its potential benefits to students. Examples of past projects and grant-writing tips are available on the Bright Ideas website.

Find us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/ncbrightideas](http://www.facebook.com/ncbrightideas) for regularly updated information regarding the program.

Since 1994, Bright Ideas has awarded Tar Heel teachers more than \$7.9 million to fund 7,700 projects benefiting 1.4 million students.

"Piedmont Electric is proud to promote creativity and enhance learning in North Carolina by giving teachers new tools to create memorable classroom experiences," said R.G. Brecheisen, CEO of the Cooperative.

"We have the utmost respect for teachers in our area and look forward to continuing to do our part to improve their jobs and invest in the future of our state through the Bright Ideas program," he added.

To learn more about the program and start an online application, visit [www.ncbrightideas.com](http://www.ncbrightideas.com).

## Install Insulation Safely

When tackling home insulation installation on your own, safety should be top of mind.

Follow these tips from the North American Insulation Manufacturers Association on safe insulation installation practices.

- Wear appropriate clothing. To reduce the chances of skin irritation, wear a head cover, gloves, and loose-fitting, long-sleeved, long-legged clothing.

- Wear proper personal protective equipment. Safety glasses and respiratory protection may be necessary, depending on your work environment.



- Take care if fibers get on your skin or eyes. If insulation fibers collect on your skin, lay tape, adhesive-side down, and then remove it gently, so the fibers are pulled from the skin. If fibers get in your eyes, never rub—flush with water or eyewash solution.

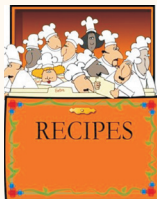
- Keep dust to a minimum. Leave the materials in packaging for as long as possible. Use tools that create the least amount of dust.

- Maintain adequate ventilation. Determine if your work site needs a dust-collection system. Also, exhausted air containing fibers should be filtered before being recirculated into inside workspaces.

Finally, ventilation systems used to capture fibers should be regularly checked.

## Pass It On...

If you have a favorite recipe you want to share with other Piedmont Electric members, please send it to: Pass It On, c/o Piedmont Connection, P.O. Drawer 1179, Hillsborough, NC 27278, or you may include it with your monthly payment.



If your recipe is printed in the newsletter, you will receive a copy of a cookbook from the Cooperative Council of N.C. Please remember to check all ingredients and cooking directions.

## Piedmont Electric CONNECTION

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Roxboro: **336.599.0151** • Elsewhere in North Carolina: **800.222.3107**

To report an outage 24 hours a day: **800.449.2667\***

To access account information 24 hours a day: **800.548.2105\***

\*Voice instructions will direct you through the system.

Call BEFORE You Dig: **800.632.4949** or **811**

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Cathy J. Johnson, CCC, Editor